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ABSTRACT

This report is designed to help policymakers, child care providers, and advocates establish child care rate support policies that support high quality in the context of government-subsidized, privately-provided child care. It also provides advice on the development and interpretation of market rate surveys of local child care fees. Part 1 discusses decisions to be made before conducting a market rate survey, including who should be surveyed, when, how, and by whom. Part 2 examines what should be included in the survey, such as data on children's age, units of service, and sliding fee scales. Part 3 focuses on the preparation and pre-testing of the survey instrument. Part 4 discusses the use of market rate survey data to establish policies that support quality child care, including the establishment of rate ceilings, the incorporation of special fees into the rate structure, and policies regarding absences, vacations, or breaks in employment. Six appendixes provide a summary of the report's recommendations, alternative approaches to defining market areas, establishing conversion formulas, proposed child care regulations that affect rate policies and ceilings, methodology, and a list of state contacts on market rate surveys. (MDM)

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